with the data of the US Customs and the EU Customs. A Committee was set up to reconcile these differences. The Committee found that there were some missing records in the merchandise trade data. This was a systemic problem that has since been rectified. Measures have been instituted to ensure proper identification and correction of missing entries in the computer data system so as to avoid-recurrence of this problem.

Engaging Private Sector in Agro-Economic Zones

1657. SHRI P.R. RAJAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are planning to engage private sector in Agro-Economic Zones; and

(b) whether Government propose to introduce projects to help agriculture exports?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) the scheme for setting up of Agri-Export Zones already envisages investment by the private sector also.

(b) Assistance for setting up of projects to help agriculture exports is an ongoing process. The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) is extending financial assistance for setting up of infrastructure projects including Centers for Perishable Cargo, market-cum-auction centers, packhouses to help boost agriculture exports.

Improving the earnings of Virginia Tobacco farmers

1658. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether any study has been made on the steps needed to be taken by the Tobacco Board to improve the individual earnings of Virginia tobacco farmers in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka;

(b) whether Tobacco Board will extend financial aid to toabacoo farmers to improve their farms and grading and storage facilities;